Providing adequate grazing facilities.

Proceedings of the Government of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore.

Order No. R. 16561—Ft. 226-1, dated 24th June 1919.

The following official paper is published for general information:—

The Government of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore have carefully considered the question of providing adequate grazing facilities for the agricultural stock in the State, in regard to which several representations are made from time to time in the Representative Assembly, and are now pleased to indicate the lines in which systematic action may be taken in this matter in the following resolution which will be taken up for final disposal in October 1919.

Though the grazing problem is not, perhaps so acute in Mysore as it is in some other parts of India, there are several localities where pasturage is insufficient. The land available for grazing has been much curtailed by the expansion of cultivation and the formation of State Forests. Concurrently with this reduction of pasture lands there has been a steady increase of agricultural stock in the State, and the pressure on the available pasturage is being increasingly felt. It is necessary that some measures should be taken to deal with the question before it assumes serious proportions.

2. The grazing lands available to the people are:—

(1) Gomal lands.
(2) Other kharab lands and assessed waste,
(3) State Forests,
(4) Amrut Mahal kavals, and
(5) Private pasture lands.

3. The published reports and statistics do not give an accurate idea of the extent of the gomal land set apart for free communal use in villages. In 1885, the extent was estimated to be 30,69,438 acres. Judging from the tenor of Government letter No. 5877, dated the 22nd February 1869, to the Superintendent, Ashtagram Division (printed on pages 284 and 285 of the Revenue Manual), it would seem that the grazing requirements of the rural population were liberally provided for during the British Administration of the Province. The standard adopted was 30 acres of good pasture, 60 acres of middling and 100 acres of inferior land for every 100 head of cattle. The actual allotment in a large number of villages seems to have been in excess of the standard, as is evident from the number of darkhasts received for superfluous gomal lands. In some cases, of course, the gomal has become insufficient owing to increase of stock and other causes; but this is by no means a general complaint.

4. The real difficulty lies not in the insufficiency of the gomal land but in its poor quality. The soil is in many cases rocky and infertile and the neglect attendant on the system of communal grazing has made it bare and barren. The gomal is everybody's property and therefore no one's care. The land is not fenced, ploughed, manured or sown. The droppings of the cattle which might fertilise the land are eagerly removed, and over-grazing is the rule. Everywhere, considering their extent, the gomal lands afford inadequate pasturage. The only means of improving the lands is to introduce some kind of regulation. Portions have to be closed against grazing for defined periods, so as to allow the grass to grow and the number of cattle should be limited to the grazing capacity of the land. The Village Forest Scheme was intended to provide these requisites but it has not so far produced any practical results. From the latest review on the working of these forests, it is seen that only 65 forests have been notified, and that in less than half of these cases, Panchayets have been actually formed. As to the actual work done, the reports do not show how far the Panchayets have carried out the various duties laid upon them in the way of protection, closure, limitation of stock and growth of fodder crops.

5. It must be irksome to villagers to give up their old and easy ways and submit to the discipline and self-restraint that the Village Forest Scheme imposes. But they must be educated to appreciate its advantages. Further, great care is necessary in the formation of Panchayets and the location of village forests. The Eastern Districts, perhaps, require a different treatment from the Western Districts, and cattle-breeding tracts require more than ordinary attention. If the scheme is to develop and realise even a fraction of its admitted potentialities, it is necessary that the initial work should be carefully carried out in all these respects. For this purpose, it may be desirable,

as in Madras, to appoint a Special Officer for a short time to go round the districts and help the Deputy Commissioners in selecting villages for the formation of village forests and in popularising the scheme.

6. *Other kharab land and assessed waste.*—Assessed waste lands in villages and miscellaneous *kharab* lands, such as tank-beds and road-margins, form a substantial addition to the gomal lands in providing pasturage for village cattle. Grazing in these lands was allowed free until the year 1865-66, when the practice of sanctioning the pasturage annually was introduced in all surveyed taluks. This system led to complaint, as speculators and outsiders were enabled to outbid the local villagers whose interests were thereby prejudiced. In 1884, therefore, a change of system was introduced by which the inhabitants of each village were allowed the option of purchasing the *hulbanni* for a fixed lumpsum payment equivalent to the average revenue derived during the previous three years and the right of pasture was auctioned only if the villagers declined to avail themselves of the privilege. The lumpsum fixed on the village was divided among the several raiyats in proportion to the number of cattle owned by them.

The approximate extent of *hulbanni* lands and the revenue realised from the same are shown in the following table :—

Statement showing particulars of hulbanni during the five years—1913-14 to 1917-18.

District	1913-14		1914-15		1915-16		1916-17		1917-18	
	Extent	Revenue	Extent	Revenue	Extent	Revenue	Extent	Revenue	Extent	Revenue
	Acres	Rs.	Acres	Rs.	Acres	Rs.	Acres	Rs.	Acres	Rs.
Bangalore ...	59,944	7,550	59,459	7,424	57,555	7,136	54,932	7,032	54,427	6,732
Kolar ...	152,513	14,651	151,679	14,531	149,155	14,430	141,732	14,221	135,665	13,988
Tumkur ...	218,284	14,075	202,090	14,800	193,077	14,586	174,203	15,089	174,203	14,108
Mysore ...	72,336	7,775	70,264	7,373	69,668	7,444	71,586	7,734	70,610	8,286
Hassan ...	107,780	7,970	96,124	7,947	92,222	7,944	88,837	7,671	84,774	7,456
Shimoga ...	131,989	9,603	124,862	9,603	121,122	9,478	118,226	9,072	115,862	8,804
Kadur ...	89,560	5,427	88,135	5,296	89,900	5,115	91,010	...	88,193	4,930
Chitaldrug ...	146,921	10,217	136,447	9,813	126,979	9,487	123,869	9,380	98,104	9,569
Total ...	974,287	77,273	929,054	76,792	899,708	75,620	864,395	70,199	814,838	73,823

The *hulbanni* revenue being assessed upon the average realisations of the previous years has always shown a tendency to remain stationary or even decline. At present, it works out to about 1½ annas per acre. The system is not only unremunerative but encourages over-grazing and the most reckless use of the pastures. Each raiyat is interested in getting as much as he can for his cattle and grazing is frequently a race for the first blades of grass that appear. There are no restrictions either on the number or kind of cattle to be grazed.

The remedy for the present defective arrangement is not easy. The raiyats may contend that, owing to the lease system, there is still speculation and hardship on poor raiyats, and that Government should abolish *hulbanni* fees. On the other hand, even the revenue of Rs. 75,000 realised in 1884 cannot be lightly thrown away. This is a question which should be left to village government to settle and, if Village Panchayets and Village Improvement Committees come forward to manage their own affairs in regard to grazing requirements and suitable control over all lands fit for grazing, Government will be prepared to hand over these lands to village management and half the revenue to village local bodies on certain conditions somewhat as follows:—

1. Foreign cattle, goats and sheep to be excluded.

2. Grazing to be restricted to the prescribed number of cattle belonging to the village.

3. Portion of the *hulbanni* revenue credited to village local bodies should be utilised for improvement of the grazing lands, reservation and watch.

8. As observed in the monograph on Mysore Cattle by the late Mr. A. Krishnaswami Iyengar: "In the earlier days of Mysore Forest Administration, the almost unrestrained immunities which the raiyats had either openly or clandestinely been enjoying were virtually withdrawn and this measure had a prejudicial effect on cattle-breeding. The principle that the cattle wealth of the country is far too important to be thus dealt with, has in recent years been recognised and restrictions have been

relaxed, cattle being allowed to graze in many Government forests or parts thereof upon the payment of a fee of two to four annas per head. It is not now unusual for cattle-owners in the plains to send their herds to distant Government forests for grazing from July to December or January, when they have to be withdrawn on account of the heat, diminished pasture and scarcity of water, but chiefly owing to fire protection measures."

9. Since the above remarks were written (1895), the practice of sending cattle for grazing to State Forests has grown in vogue. The following statement shows that while the area of State Forests has increased 2½ times, the number of cattle grazed therein has increased nearly sevenfold:—

District	1895-96			1917		
	Area of State Forests in sq. miles	No. of cattle grazed	Revenue realised	Area of State Forests in sq. miles	No. of cattle grazed	Revenue realised
Bangalore ...	220	17,061	5,269	386½	37,020	19,446
Tumkur ...	124	5,466	Not known	207	33,085	8,224
Kolar ...	77	4,733	5,233	230	23,897	7,696
Mysore ...	285	8,588	2,520	649	26,426	10,277
Hassan ...	112	(Not reported)	4,621	209	6,025	7,240
Shimoga ...	348	Do	2,076	562	21,611	7,554
Kadur ...	74	2,872	512	363½	5,421	1,932
Chitaldrug ...	11	2,713	2,388	337½	122,668	13,182
Total ...	1,251	41,433 (excluding Hassan and Shimoga).	22,619 (excluding Tumkur).	2,944½	276,153 or 248,517 (excluding Hassan and Shimoga Districts).	75,551

10. The present system of grazing in State Forests is thus described in Conservator's letter No. 1626, dated the 11th August 1916:—

"*Levy of license fees.*—Grazing by licenses is generally resorted to in almost all the State Forests. Horned cattle and sheep are admitted to the forests for six months in the year between June and December on payment of a fixed scale of fees as noted in the margin. Concession rates at half the license fees and sometimes free grazing is permitted in respect of cattle belonging to villages which have contributed lands for the formation of State Forests, or which do not possess sufficient grazing areas according to the decisions recorded at the time of the settlement of the forests concerned.

	Ordinary Licenses	*Nomad Licenses*
Cows and Oxen ...	4 annas per head	6 annas per head
Buffaloes ...	8 do	12 do
Sheep ...	1½ do	2 do

"*Lumpsum levy of grazing fees.*—This method is largely adopted in the Chitaldrug District and to a small extent, in others. The cattle in the villages in the neighbourhood of State Forests are enumerated and a lumpsum fee fixed for each village calculated at full license rates for half the number of cattle in the village, the amount so fixed being subject to revision periodically at the discretion of the Forest authorities. Villagers who are averse to take advantage of this concession are at liberty to graze their cattle in the State Forests on payment of the usual license fees.

"*Lease of Plantations and sale of grass crop.*—In some plantations declared as State Forests, grass is leased out. The lessees in their turn, sublet the grazing at rates fixed by them per head of cattle. The sale and harvesting of grass crop is usually resorted to in the plantations by the local and British Military authorities."

11. Though grazing in State Forests is becoming common, we have not yet evolved a well considered grazing policy. Cattle are regarded as unwelcome visitors in State Forests and the question of grazing has been hitherto considered solely with reference to the fees that might be demanded. But the financial aspect of the question

is not the most important. In recent years, various attempts have been made in different parts of India to improve grazing facilities in State forests, to remove the interference and exactions of petty subordinates and to enlist the help of the rural population in the protection of State Forests where grazing is permitted. It is high time that similar measures were initiated here.

12. *Kancha system.*—What is known as the Kancha system has been tried with success in certain districts of the Madras Presidency and is reported to be growing in popularity. Under this system, open portions of forests are divided into grazing blocks or Kanchas which are sold by auction subject to an upset price generally of 4 annas per acre. The Kanchas are closed to grazing for a defined part of the year (July to end of October) and the number of cattle to be admitted is limited to the grazing capacity of the block, *i. e.*, one cow unit for every two acres and one sheep for every acre. The Kanchadar is held responsible for the protection of tree growth, etc., in the Kanchas and in the event of his infringing any of the conditions, his lease is liable to be cancelled and he may be required to pay the compensation that may be fixed for any damage that he may have caused or permitted. Under this system the growth of grass is improved and the lands better protected, while the interference of subordinates is eliminated. The system enables village communities as well as individual raiyats to lease Kanchas for their exclusive use. It has also had the effect of inducing raiyats to combine together and form Panchayets in order to obtain lease of Kanchas. The rent is fairly high and brings a fair revenue to Government but the money is mostly utilised for improving the grazing blocks by digging and deepening wells and introducing better kinds of grass.

I think it very desirable that this system with any modifications that may be demanded by local conditions should be immediately introduced at least in the Maidan Districts of the State. It is likely that there will be discontent among the people at first but the system must be persevered in for some years in order to prove a success.

13. *Forest village system.*—In order to meet the case of villages which, under Forest Settlement, have been conceded privileges of grazing their cattle free or at concession rates, the following modified arrangements may be adopted:—

(*a*) Separate blocks of open forest must be constituted for the different villages or groups of villages.

(*b*) The blocks should be demarcated and should be, if possible, extensive enough to provide grazing for the entire number of cattle which the villagers are entitled to graze.

(*c*) Grazing fees should be charged according to the terms of the Forest Settlement but they should be commuted as far as possible into a lumpsum payment.

(*d*) The villagers must be made to understand that the continuance of the privilege will be conditional on their discharging certain specific obligations, *e.g.*, protection of forest from fire and damage.

(*e*) Forest subordinates will check from time to time the number of cattle grazed and the condition of the block. They will have no authority to impound cattle or in any way interfere with grazing. But abuse of privileges will be punished by withdrawal of the same or by enhancement of grazing fees.

14. These principles are an adaptation of the Forest Village Scheme which has been lately introduced in some parts of the Madras Presidency. The key-note of the scheme, in the words of the Madras Government, is "the recognition of the paramount necessity of enlisting the people on the side of the Forest Department, instead of leaving them to regard the department and its officers as its natural enemies. That forest conservancy will never be really effective so long as those who live in or near the forests are actually opposed to it, has been borne out by the past history of the Forest Department."

This policy of ensuring the co-operation of villagers is said to have been followed, in some form or other, with useful results in the United Provinces and in the Bombay Presidency and there can be no doubt that it marks the true line of progress.

15. It will be observed that the scheme applies only to open portions of forests where cattle grazing is permissible. And it does not in any way diminish the control of the Forest Department. Breaches of forest rules are not overlooked; only they are punished in a different manner. Instead of resorting to prosecution, impounding

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of cattle and other vexatious proceedings in individual cases, the whole village community is penalised by enhanced fees or even loss of grazing privileges, if it has been negligent or mischievous.

16. *The permit system.*—The object of the above proposals is to eliminate eventually the permit system which is generally associated with grave abuses. But until the people get accustomed to the new measures now suggested, it will be necessary to give them the option of grazing their cattle on annual permits. But this must be made slightly more irksome than at present. The grazing fees now charged may be doubled and in some places even quadrupled so that the people may understand in time the advantages of regulated grazing offered by the 'kancha' and Forest Village systems. The rates may be some what as follows. For sheep special pasturage should be provided for.

	Ordinary Licenses	*Normal Licenses*
Cows and Oxen ...	8 annas per head	Rs. 1 per head
Buffaloes ...	Rs. 1 per head	Rs. 2 per head

17. *Improvement of grazing areas.*—While endeavouring to enlist the co-operation of the people in the manner above suggested, the Forest Department should, on its part, take steps to improve grazing areas in State Forests. As these will in future be limited to defined portions of State Forests, it should be possible to devote closer attention to:—

(i) the provision of facilities for watering cattle,
(ii) fencing grazing blocks,
(iii) sowing better kinds of grass, and
(iv) departmental supply of improved fodder to village markets.

There is a large variety of valuable grass in forest areas which, if cut, pressed and commercially dealt with, may find a market. Raiyats may be encouraged to stall-feed their cattle with this grass. The Forest Economist may investigate this question.

18. *Amrut Mahal kavals.*—The Amrut Mahal Department has unique opportunities for establishing model pastures in the rich and extensive lands at its disposal and setting an object lesson to the Panchayets of Village Forests and owners of private pastures. At present, very little care is taken of the Amrut Mahal kavals, beyond closing them to pasture during certain portions of the year. The departmental cattle are grazed for a month or so after which the stubble grass is sold to the villagers.

The question of improving the present system of management, which has been handed down from olden days when land had little or no value, has been frequently discussed. Recently, a number of kavals covering an area of nearly 12,500 acres have been handed over for cultivation and some small improvements have been ordered, but the working of the department can hardly be considered satisfactory until the following essential matters are still open to question:—

(1) The strength at which the herds should be maintained.
(2) The extent of grazing land required for the departmental cattle, based upon reliable data.
(3) The possibility of feeding the cattle with some kind of cultivated fodder, instead of their depending exclusively on pasture.
(4) Preparation of simple working plans for the several kavals.

The present Officiating Superintendent of the Amrut Mahal Department has been asked to submit proposals for the better management of the department and his report is due in June next. He should specially advert to the points above noted. The new Animal Husbandry Officer may be requested to examine the whole question of Amrit Mahal kaval lands and formulate a definite scheme.

Government Order G. 4757-61—Mily. 235-16-3, dated 4th September 1918.

19. *Private pasture lands.*—In the monograph on Mysore cattle already referred to, it is observed "Many agriculturists have grazing lands of their own and, in addition, are also turning portions of their fields into pasture. This is a move in the right direction and further improvement in this respect may be safely predicted as the price of cattle goes on increasing."

This tendency towards the formation of private pastures is still observable, especially in tracts where cattle rearing is practised as a remunerative industry. In the year 1916-17, 12,51,084 acres were shown as current fallows out of a total of 77,73,754 acres under occupancy. Though occupied lands might be left fallow for other reasons, there can be no doubt that in the majority of cases the fallow lands are meant as pasture. As might be expected, these lands are generally looked after with greater care than *gomal* or *hulbanni* lands. The system of private pasture lands requires every encouragement.

120. Before the Survey and Settlement, it was usual to give lands required for pasture at concession rates. The late Sir James Gordon, Chief Commissioner of Mysore, was of opinion that Amrut Mahal kavals given up by the Department might be given out at a special pasture rate of half the survey assessment. He wrote "should any of the kavals be hereafter given up by Amrut Mahal Department and not be required by the Mysore State, there need be no occasion to break them up and give them out for cultivation. It would be more advantageous to the public interest and would indeed meet an existing want if each of such kavals were sold as above to the highest bidder, subject to the permanent rent of half the survey assessment in order to encourage the breeding of cattle by substantial raiyats and other private individuals."

It may not be practicable at the present time to adopt the above proposals in their entirety, but now that we are breaking up large areas of land belonging to the Amrut Mahal Department, it is worth while considering whether a few portions may not be disposed of on the lines contemplated by the late Sir James Gordon.

21. The Agricultural Department may usefully undertake to supply good grass seed to raiyats and popularise the cultivation of fodder crops.

22. *General.*—The grazing resources of the country are rich and varied but badly neglected. The *gomal* and *hulbanni* lands have greatly deteriorated, owing to over-grazing and inattention. Some of the State Forests provide good grazing owing to exclusion of cattle during portions of the year, but the admission of cattle to these forests is subjected to petty annoyances and the exaction of subordinates. The Amrut Mahal Department which might have been expected to keep its kavals in an efficient condition leaves everything to nature and makes no attempt to grow or conserve grass on scientific principles.

The measures of improvement must necessarily be varied and adapted to the requirements of the several classes of land spoken of and the departments interested therein:—

GOMAL.

(i) For the improvement of *gomal* lands, our endeavour should be to push on with the scheme of Village Panchayets. For this purpose, it may be necessary to appoint a Special Officer as in Madras. Perhaps the Forest Settlement Officer might undertake this duty obtaining technical advice from Forest Officers and the expert in Animal Husbandry should one be appointed.

HULBANNI.

(ii) Indiscriminate grazing in *hulbanni* lands should be stopped and their management entrusted to Village Panchayets and Village Improvement Committees where such exist.

(iii) The *hulbanni* fees may be enhanced.

STATE FORESTS.

(iv) The Kancha system may be developed in the Maidan Districts, in lieu of the permit system now in force.

(v) In order to regulate grazing privileges conceded by Forest Settlement, the arrangements indicated in para 13 may be adopted.

(vi) The permit system should eventually disappear, but so long as it is in force, the grazing fees should be raised.

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(vii) The grazing blocks in State Forests should be improved by:—

(*a*) providing facilities for watering cattle,
(*b*) fencing the blocks, and
(*c*) growing suitable kinds of grass.

AMRUT MAHAL KAVALS.

(viii) The entire system of management has to be reformed and placed on a rational basis. Further investigation is necessary in regard to the points mentioned in para 18.

(ix) The question of granting on *hulgaval* tenure lands relinquished by the Amrut Mahal Department may be investigated in view to encourage the formation of private pastures.

(x) The Agricultural Department may usefully undertake to supply good grass seed to raiyats and popularise the growth of fodder crops. The expert in Animal Husbandry should be asked to devote early attention to the question of improving grazing facilities and practices in the State.

The above proposals are published for general information and may be discussed at the next session of the Representative Assembly after which Government will pass final orders, taking into consideration the views of the Revenue, Forest and Agricultural Departments.

By Order,
C. S. BALASUNDARAM IYER,
Secy. to Govt., Rev. Dept.